**Only a third of Australians are meeting the recommended 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week**

Article from: [Herald Sun](http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/)

Marianne Betts

August 15, 2009 12:00am

**IT seems Australians aren't as fit as we like to think we are.**

A new study has revealed while most of us believe we are meeting the recommended 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, in fact only a third of us are.

The joint study of 131 office workers was conducted by Queensland University, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute and Medibank Private.

Baker IDI physical activity head, Associate Professor David Dunstan, said this gross overestimate of what people perceived they were doing versus what they were actually doing was consistent with overseas studies.

"Self-reporting is always open to, 'I think I'm going to have to look good', and for some people it's hard to remember what they've done throughout the day," Assoc Prof Dunstan said.

The 131 office workers wore an accelerometer, a small device that objectively measured the duration and intensity of movement, and they also recorded diaries and completed questionnaires for a week earlier in the year.

Results showed on average just 5 per cent of their total days were spent engaged in moderate to vigorous exercise, which was at least a brisk walk, he said.

Sedentary lifestyles increased the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

"We suspected people were sitting a lot during their work day, and now we've been able to categorise this is the case.

"It's well known a brisk walk improves people's health, but what we're now starting to question is if sitting for the remainder of the day is potentially going to erode that benefit.

"We're now starting to see that irrespective of how active people are - even if they are exercising for 30 minutes a day - if they sit for prolonged periods throughout the day they are at increased risk of heart disease and diabetes."